



a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that Honors and Supports Gold Star Families  
by preserving the memory of our Fallen Heroes through service to others in need.





They say that “a Hero dies twice ~ once when the last breath leaves their body, and again when their name is spoken for the last time”.

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The Gold Star Mission strives to preserve the memories and ensure the names of our nearly 300 Fallen Illinois Service Men and Women live on!

*“ALWAYS REMEMBER ~ NEVER FORGET”*



## **Presentation:**

- How/why Gold Star Mission was established
- The Mission and what we do
- How we do the Mission
- The Scholarship Program
- How Gold Star Mission is doing
- The 2021 Gold Star 500
- Future Operations/Programs
- How you can assist
- Questions

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# Great ideas often have humble beginnings. Gold Star Mission started with Jake...

SSgt Jacob Frazier became the Illinois National Guard's first Service member killed in action, post September 11th, 2001. He was 24 years young when he selflessly sacrificed his life in service to our great nation on a battlefield in Afghanistan March 29th, 2003. For many years I kept SSgt Frazier's photograph on my office wall at Camp Lincoln, in Springfield, Illinois. Far too often, people with no direct military affiliation, came to my office for meetings. Later gesturing towards Jake's picture, they'd ask, "Who's that?" I would always tell the same story, how he was the first post 9/11, how he was a tactical combat controller, how he was Illinois' only Air Guard member killed in action to date, as they listened intently about this amazing Service member. Jake sacrificed himself on foreign soil while most his age were finishing college, starting careers and families. Moreover, as time wore on, realization struck me, I knew little about the man myself, I actually needed to know much more about him. I needed to, for I wanted to tell the story of Jake's 'dash', the short line between his birth and death that so defined him. I wanted to accurately tell, and ensure that his story, who he was, how he lived, would Always be Remembered and Never Forgotten.



David Helfrich,  
Past President and Co-Founder of The Gold Star Mission

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## Mission:

*The Gold Star Mission is a nonprofit organization that seeks to honor and support Gold Star Families by preserving the memory of our Fallen Heroes through service to others.*



## What we do:

- Pay Tribute to Fallen Heroes and their Families
- Enlist Public Support of Gold Star Families
- Provide Unique Programs Honoring the Fallen Heroes
- Encouraging and Building Selfless Service

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## How do we do it:

- Rockford "Run For the Fallen" - May (Half Marathon, 5K & 3K Run/Walk)
- "General Logan 200" - July (200+ miles, 20 hours endurance bicycling event)
- MOAA/Gold Star Mission Golf Outing - July (co-hosted local Golf Outing)
- "Gold Star 500" - September (500+ miles, five day endurance bicycling event)



SPC Adriana Salem



LCpl Alec Catherwood



SGT Andrew Lancaster



SPC Andrew Wade



CPL Alex Martinez

## What else we do:

- Scholarship Program and Banquet
- National Guard Association of Illinois Conference (annual)
- Department of Illinois VFW Conference (annual)
- Department of Illinois American Legion Conference (annual)
- Illinois State Fair Veteran's Day (annual)
- Other community or business/corporation presentations



Sgt Benjamin Smith



Capt Brandon Cyr

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## Scholarship Program:

- In February 2018, Gold Star Mission began awarding scholarships to individuals who exemplify selfless service and honor our Fallen Heroes.
- The Gold Star Mission allocates funds raised through Gold Star Mission events to support the Gold Star Mission Scholarship Fund.
- To date GSM has awarded 164 Scholarships in the name of our Fallen Heroes.



## Eligibility:

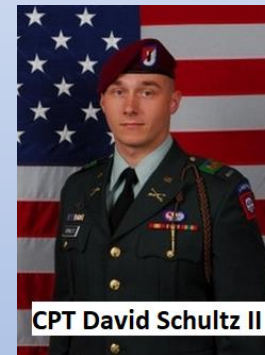
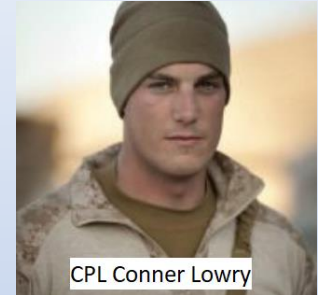
- **Anyone** continuing their higher education through; college, university, trade or technical schools.
- **Willing** to learn and share stories about a Fallen Hero.
  - Awardees receive a certificate indicating "In Honor of" (specific Name of one of our Fallen Heroes).
  - Awardees receive a Memorial Bracelet with the Name of the Fallen Hero.



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## How have we done:

- Conducted 20 organized events since 2017
- Bicycled over 75,000 miles in organized GSM events since 2017
- Ran/Walked over 4200 miles in organized GSM events since 2019
- 164 Scholarships Awarded
- Received GuideStar Silver Seal of Transparency Rating
- 1500+ Average Contacts on each Social Media Post
- Nearly 2100 Facebook Friends
- Hundreds of Illinois Communities Engaged
- Successfully completed an Independent Financial Audit
- 94 cents on each dollar spent on Program costs
- Zero costs associated with Salary or Facility



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## 2021 ~ Gold Star 500

**Total: 5 Days, 520+ Miles**

### **Day 1: Tuesday ~ 21 September 2021**

**Decatur to Urbana**

**6 Scheduled Halts**

**105 Miles / RON – Urbana National Guard Armory**

### **Day 2: Wednesday ~ 22 September 2021**

**Urbana to Lawrenceville**

**8 Scheduled Halts**

**128 Miles / RON – Lawrenceville National Guard Armory**

### **Day 3: Thursday ~ 23 September 2021**

**Lawrenceville to Mt. Vernon**

**5 Scheduled Halts**

**94 Miles / RON – Mt Vernon Readiness Center**

### **Day 4: Friday ~ 24 September 2021**

**Mt Vernon to Effingham**

**6 Scheduled Halts**

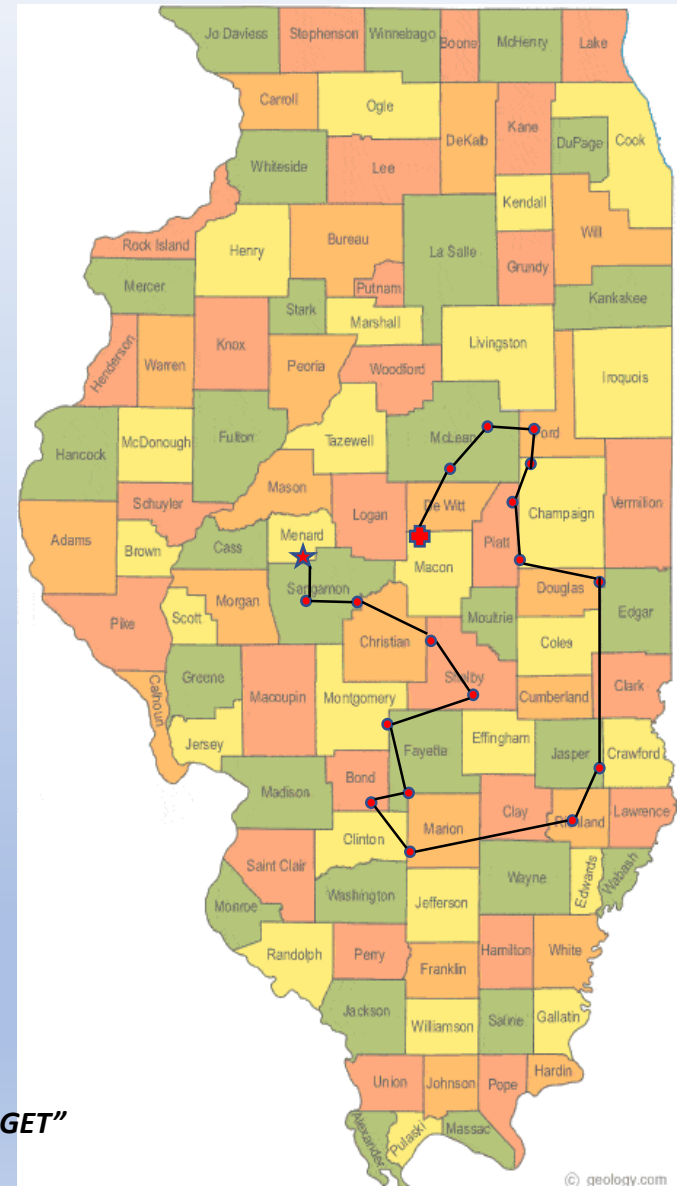
**103 Miles / RON – Effingham National Guard Armory**

### **Day 5: Saturday ~ 25 September 2021**

**Effingham to Springfield**

**6 Scheduled Halts**

**94 Miles / End: Scheels**



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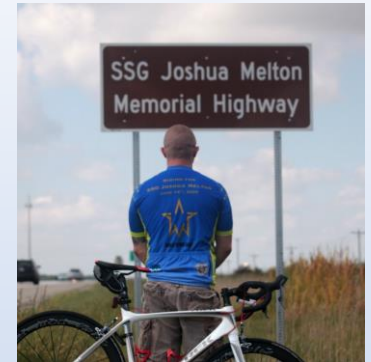
## Future Operations/Programs:

- Expand network of Volunteers!
- Expand the pool of Participants!
- Continue the Scholarship Program, then do it again!
- Continue conducting the “big” three events, while expanding into more communities!
- Add another “big” event (run or ride), every 2-3 years!
- ***Initiate Oral/Recorded History of Fallen Heroes!***

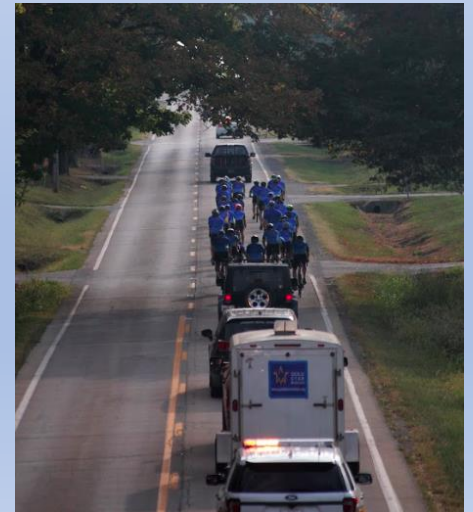


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# How can you assist....

- ***Learn more about our Fallen Heroes!***
- **Volunteer!**
  - ✓ **Event Support**
  - ✓ **Unique Skill Set Support**
- **Participate in an event!**
- **Support a rider, or group of riders!**

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# Questions?

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Eric Murray – Director of Operations

Gold Star Mission Volunteer

Gold Star 500 Ride Director

Retired U.S. Army / Illinois Army National Guard

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